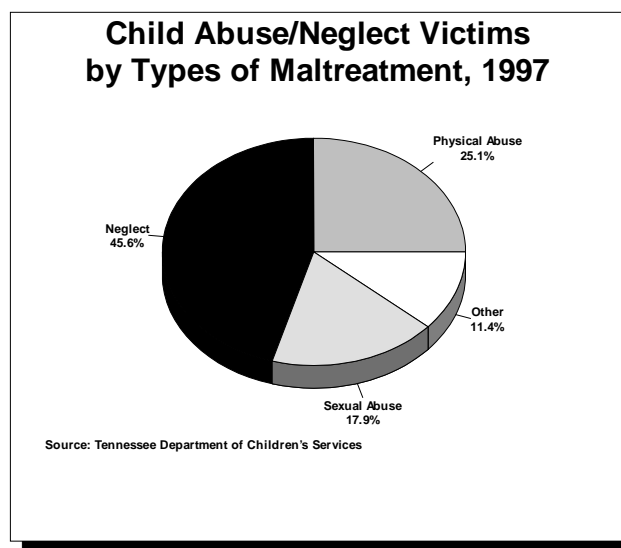


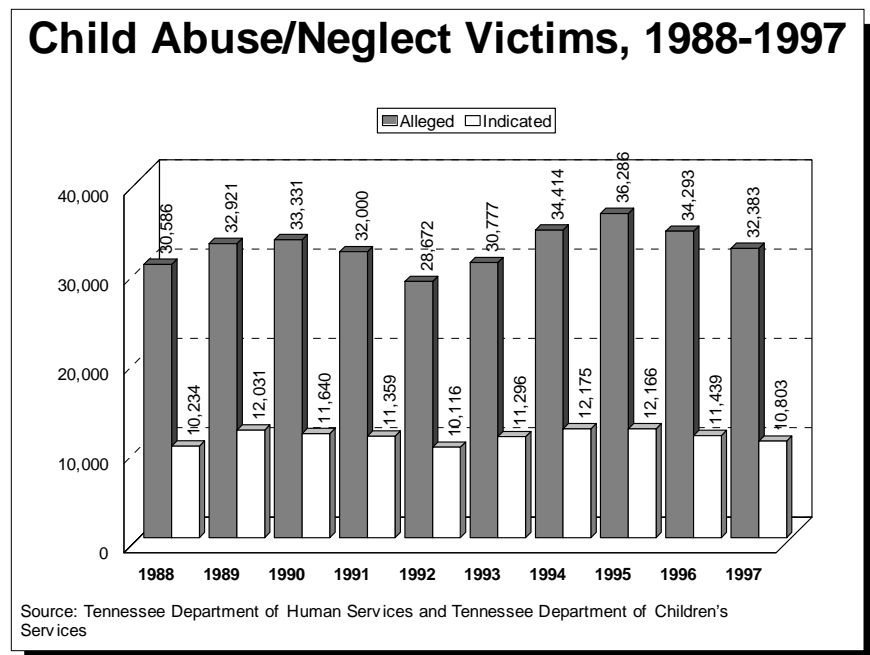
Child Abuse

Each day in Tennessee, 30 children are abused or neglected. Of the 32,383 cases of alleged abuse or neglect investigated by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services in Fiscal Year 1997, abuse or neglect was indicated in 10,803 cases. These figures demonstrate little improvement over the past 10 years to reduce incidents of abuse and neglect in Tennessee and challenge its citizens and leaders to increase efforts of prevention.

Statistics reveal that in an overwhelming number of cases children are abused or neglected by those they love and trust the most. In 87 percent of cases investigated, the child was alleged to be abused or neglected by a relative or someone living in his or her own home. School, child care, and institutional staff or foster parents are alleged perpetrators in less than 3 percent of cases, and strangers in only 0.2 percent.



There are four types of child abuse. Physical abuse is the non-accidental physical injury of a child, including beatings, bites, burns, strangulation, scalding that results in bruises, welts, fractures, or serious internal injuries. Sexual abuse is forced sexual contact of any nature, either physical or non-physical, between a child and an adult. Emotional abuse is a pattern of maladaptive behavior that attacks emotional development, or sense of self-worth. Neglect is withholding or failing to provide a child with the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter, medical care, hygiene, attention, or supervision needed for optimal physical or emotional growth and development.



Some of the signs of abuse or neglect that may be seen in children are repeated injuries that are not properly treated or adequately explained; unusual behavior, ranging from disruptive or aggressive to passive and withdrawn; disturbed sleep, such as nightmares or bedwetting; loss of appetite or overeating; a drop in grades or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed; and exhibition of sexual behavior not appropriate for age.